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CALENDAR

LETTERS

'HITLERIAN RHETORIC'

Henry Jaglom's abusive tirade against Hans-Jurgen Syberberg and his film, "Our Hitler" (Calendar Letters, June 22), has the very same Hitlerian rhetoric and disregard for objectivity that Jaglom bemoans so luridly.

Jaglom is so desperate to equate Hitler and Syberberg that he puts words in the film maker's mouth and twists the content of the Steve Wasserman interview with Syberberg (Calendar, June 15) to fit his own narrow view of world politics. Thus, Syberberg's assertion that "Holocaust" constitutes "making gold out of the ashes of the victims" becomes, for Jaglom, "They make money even out of the murder of their relatives." Had Jaglom taken the time to see the film before recording his preposterous assumptions, he would have found that Syberberg condemns the German people for their marketing of Hitler and the Second World War as much as the unnamed (and certainly not solely Jewish) Hollywood moguls who packaged the greatest crime of our century in a soap-opera format and interrupted scenes of slaughter and horror with extensive and vulgar commercials.

Further, Francis Coppola and Zoetrope Studios, not Syberberg, are responsible for the ridiculous $12 admission price of "Our Hitler," a price which they attempted to justify by claiming that the film could not be distributed any other way.

I think that Jaglom is sitting in an ivory tower composed of the seemingly endless guilt and paranoia that idealizes the Jewish state. Israel and its organizations are all very well and fine, but they are helplessly mired in the past, seemingly unable to produce any viable alternatives and programs for the future. Syberberg's film provides ways of going on without forgetting the past, but without letting it drag one down.

I am a Jew, but if defense of my homeland involves Jaglom's simple-minded name-calling and unsupported accusations, I would prefer to side with Syberberg's universal skepticism and fear for humanity's future.

MICHAEL AUERBACH,
Entertainment Editor,
UCLA Daily Bruin

BLACKS IN BALLET

Regarding "Where are the Blacks in Ballet?" (Jack Slater, Calendar, June 8): we black, classical dancers are here, there and everywhere—some searching endlessly for performing opportunities and others like myself bent on creating our own vehicles of expression. After teaching in 15 American cities, I can attest that there are many aspiring young black dancers, all confronted with the same policies of exclusion and backward thinking of people like American Ballet Theater's Oliver Smith. Obviously, blacks can do ballet, and talk to the contrary is simple a last-resort tactic to keep the doors closed to blacks and other minorities . . .

GERALD F. McCALL
Artistic Director,
Mid-City Ballet

'BLUES' BOTHERS

I appreciate Clarke Taylor's mention of me in his article on "The Blues Brothers" press party in New York (Calendar, June 22) but out of context, the quotes attributed to me seem somewhat ambiguous. I'd like to clarify them for the record.

When I compared (director) John Landis' use of spectacular, rapid-fire stunts with Mack Sennett's techniques, I meant to imply that Sennett, given today's technology, would probably have used it the same way.

When I speculated on the film's possible social significance, it was because I found it representative of the 1980's and the violence which surrounds all aspects or our lives. Perhaps in this ultra-computerized era, it takes car crashes to affirm individuality. Perhaps Landis' young stars bravely singing and dancing, surrounded by the military and all those police, reflects the desperate plight of today's youth, threatened and manipulated by a cynically self-serving call to arms. They, like the Blues Brothers, have to keep on dancing. If they stop long enough to see all the guns aimed at them, they'll die of fright. Maybe that's why they wear those dark glasses.

HENRY GIBSON, Malibu

Paul McCartney

Devo

McCARTNEY

In regard to Robert Hilburn's review of Paul McCartney's new album ("McCartney's One-Man Show," The Times, June 7), I just can't believe Hilburn had his turntable revolving in the right direction. "McCartney II" may be simple, homespun and sound like it was recorded on the john, but I find "II" one of the most pleasing of all the McCartney albums. It contains some of the most beautiful melodies McCartney has written with and since the Beatles.

I mean, what is McCartney doing anyway, writing music or trying to find a cure for cancer?

PAMELA A. ROSENDAHL,
Laguna Beach

Hilburn used words like "embarrassing," "tired," and "clinkers" to describe McCartney's new album, but the same can be said for Hilburn's review. He describes the song "Waterfalls" as using "tired images," but who ever said that love ballads have to use rhetorical structure or multisyllabic words? After all, the lyrics, "Love, love me do , you know I love you" are the words that started a musical phenomenon that will never be equaled—of course, McCartney's old band the Beatles.

RICHARD BORDEN, Woodland Hills

NERDS AND SPUDS

R. Meltzer's review of Devo's new album, "Freedom of Choice" (Calendar, June 15), must have been a very bad joke. The spudboys have put out another great album and Meltzer has put forward a very bad review. He used many big words but he didn't really say anything. By the way, I resent being called a nerd and I don't belong to any chess club.

ERICK BECKER, Anaheim

I'm glad someone has finally exposed the sham "Devo" really is! ("Harsh Words for Devo's New LP," R. Meltzer, Calendar, June 15). Devo isn't really critical of machine-age change, they are singing for it, worshipping it and mocking their faithful "spud" followers. Devo is playing a little game, sitting back and laughing at their double messages. In the end, Devo will be the most fooled. People aren't going to buy terrible, brash-sounding music for too long. Why would anyone want to be called a "spud," anyway?

STEPHANIE BROWN, Newport Beach

Regarding the application of Devo critic R. Meltzer in the competition of poster child in the 1980 campaign against Infantile Convoluted Syntax, a dread disease afflicting the pretentions of pre-adolescents: a warm and enthusiastic yes!

HENRY JOSEFSBERG, Los Angeles

'CRUISING' FANTASY

How ludicrous it is that producer Jerry Weintraub and director William Friedkin have now found it necessary to call a press conference in regard to the ratings dispute surrounding their movie "Cruising" (Dale Pollock report, Wednesday Calendar, June 18). They are charging they have been victims of "harassment" through "innuendo" and are "being accused of something we never did." But, of course, they are merely fantasizing once again, this time about the few more bucks their generally panned flick might still have a chance of bringing in, if only they can stir up some more controversy before the summer engagements begin.

The hard truth is that Weintraub and Friedkin are themselves guilty of malicious harassment through innuendo and fantasized misrepresentations of fact in their accusing portrayal of the gay leather community doing some things we never did in situations that do not exist outside isolated incidents.

A. McCARTY, Los Angeles

TAKING 'UMBRELLAGE'

BOO to the person that reviewed "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" at the Ahmanson Theatre (Dan Sullivan, Thursday Calendar, June 12). Last week, my husband invited me for an afternoon at the Music Center, with dinner following. I had read very negative things in the Calendar about the show and was quite hesitant about seeing this production. However, the idea of spending this type of day sounded very nice, so we decided to chance it.

What a delightful few hours we spent. Nor were we alone in daring the possibility of a boring time. There was a full house and everyone within earshot seemed totally charmed.

Ergo: Too much credibility is attributed to some critics. If I failed to mention the columnist by name, it is because frankly my dears, I just don't give a nilpmahC.

JOYCE LEE, North Hollywood

WRITER AS AUTHOR

Once again, Charles Champlin has exposed the fallacy that underlies all his work—though not his alone. In his review of "The Island" (Friday Calendar, June 13), he says " . . . directors tend to make the scripts they are given." Very true. So why does he continue to hold the director responsible when a film succeeds and hold the writer responsible only when a film fails? And why does he persist in calling the director the author of the film when the director simply "realizes" the plot, characters, and themes of someone else?

Critical integrity demands that henceforth Champlin hold the writer responsible for a film's success as well as for its failure. And that he correct the fallacy of his critical method by recognizing the writer as author of the film.

JOHN TRUBY, Santa Monica

WHERE'S RICHARD?

While Saturday and Sunday have indeed become "Million Dollar Weekends" on many local radio stations ("Radio Twists Its Nostalgia Dials," Calendar, June 15), if author James Brown heard any of Little Richard's contributions to rock-and-roll history, he didn't hear them on KRLA.

After two years of listening, I've yet to hear even *one* of his records, although cover versions by Elvis, the Beatles, Mitch Ryder, etc., are apparently allowed.

When one of my friends called the station to inquire about this apparent blacklisting, he was told that KRLA doesn't play Little Richard because "Art (Laboe) doesn't like it." A wop bop a lu bop a wop bam boom!

GARY McGINTY, Pasadena

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